

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A specimen surface level adjusting method used in a pattern inspecting apparatus for inspecting a pattern on a specimen surface on the basis of a detected image
5 obtained by projecting inspecting light onto the specimen surface, the specimen surface level adjusting method comprising projecting level measuring light onto the specimen surface, detecting the position of the measuring light reflected on the specimen surface,
10 calculating the level of the specimen surface on the basis of the position of the optical axis, adjusting the level of the specimen surface so that the calculated level may be held within the depth of focus of a pattern inspecting optical system, detecting the
15 intensity of the reflected light, and fixing the specimen surface to a reference level, if the intensity is less than a specific threshold value.